

Sustainability Plan for West Swindon Parish Council

Created by Bioregional, One Planet Living is all about living within the natural limits of our one planet. If everyone lived like the average European, we would need the resources of three planets. These principles map onto the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and allow for a holistic approach that helps people work and live healthier, happier, and greener lives.

Our vision for the West Swindon Parish

West Swindon Parish Council manages a range of different types of land across West Swindon and will apply One Planet Living Principles to our approach to grounds maintenance and how we work.



West Swindon has green spaces and green corridors in abundance. Our vision is for West Swindon residents to live happy, healthy lives within the limits of the planet, leaving space for wildlife and wilderness.



1. Health and Happiness

- We will promote health and happiness by maintaining public open spaces for recreation and sporting use.
- We will continue to develop spaces for outdoor exercise
- We will work to ensure that cycle paths are clear of overgrowth throughout the year for pedestrians and cyclists
- We will support local volunteering and participation to help grow a sense of community and social connections
- We will support local groups who promote mental health and wellbeing
- We will work with other partners to provide extra defibrillators and bleed kits

Actions @ 01.06.24:

Ongoing inspections and repairs of play equipment

Completed refurbishment of Bess Road muga allowing wider range of ball games

Responding to reports of overgrown vegetation

Ongoing support volunteer group clean ups

Ongoing support to established litter picking groups (Westlea, Shaw, Toothill)

Encourage and support new volunteers

Improving the walkways at Claypits Play Area and Horse Sculpture



2. Equity and local economy

- We will operate as an open and transparent local council with time for public questions and open to local scrutiny.

Actions @ 01.06.24

Promote awareness of elections and related processes

Public attendance at meetings promoted

Online and virtual access continued

Launched a new website with better visibility and accessibility



3. Culture and Community

- We will keep village centre spaces and local areas clean and tidy
- We will care for open spaces so that they can be used for community activities.
- We will be open to grant applications from local groups and projects.
- We will provide practical support to community groups and buildings where we can.
- We will improve the Parish Council's website to better promote community activities and events across the Parish community

Actions @ 01.06.24

New floral planters added to Toothill

Grants scheme ongoing – merged with the accumulated funds in the Clean and Green Fund

Share promotion of local events and activities

Promote visibility of the Parish Council at events, fetes and social media



4. Land and nature

- We will promote biodiversity through the support of natural wild meadow spaces within the Parish.
- Rotation of low mow sites each year
- We will work with Swindon Borough Council's community forest officers to add new tree planting across the Parish
- We will regularly review our grass cutting routine with the aim of promoting regrowth of wild flowers between cuts (daisies, clover, buttercups) throughout the grass cutting season.
- We will leave copses, wooded verges and tree noise barriers as wild spaces with natural planting.
- We will identify key spaces across the Parish to form Bee-line corridors.
- We will cut shrubs and hedgerows annually

- We will use peat-free compost for container planting
- We will keep natural ponds and waterways free of litter and flytipping as best we can working from the bankside, promoting these spaces as natural habitats.
- We will reduce the use of chemicals and weedkillers to a minimum and withdraw from routine applications.

Actions @ 01.06.24

Ongoing natural meadows at Eastleaze field, Edgehill Haven and Shaw Ridge.

Low mow spaces agreed for

- Rear of Saltway field (walking path to be mown through)
- Parts of Shaw Ridge Linear Park
- Shaw Forest park – around the seating area
- Peatmoor Lake by the restaurant

No routine weedkiller around furniture and obstacles

Adding new planting at Toothill, Freshbrook and Shaw village centres and planted tree saplings around the perimeter of Toothill Park and Shaw Ridge

Distributing wildflower seed where it is practical to do.

Liaison ongoing with Swindon Borough Council for additional tree planting, sites agreed and planting schemes scheduled.

Supporting local groups to purchase native wild flowers and plants (Greendown, Westlea, Shaw FAB) and responded to requests to deal with invasive plants where it is appropriate to take action

Liaise with the Environment Agency on the maintenance of local streams and brooks

Liaise with the Highways Agency on ways to promote roadside biodiversity



5. Sustainable Water

- We will be mindful of our use of water as part of our day to day service delivery



6. Local and sustainable food

- We will support initiatives that tackle food waste and redistribution of food resources
- We will continue to provide allotments and will review other options for growing for residents in West Swindon

Actions @ 01.06.24:

Creation of a community allotment at Blagrove allotment site

Work to enable community growing on going

Liaison with Swindon Borough Council on wellbeing and community resources

Investigating community access to surplus food

Provided a grant to Toothill Church for its Welcome Space



7. Travel and transport

- We will keep cycle ways and footpath clear and accessible.
- We will promote a clean and green environment to encourage people to make use of their local routes.
- We will aim to ensure that local bus stops are litter free.
- We will use electric vehicles where it is practical to do so.

Actions @ 01.06.24:

Electric van for routine play inspections and general maintenance

Ongoing routine maintenance and street cleansing

Liaison with Swindon Borough Council highways on condition of footpaths and cycle ways

Reporting of overgrown vegetation on private property to Swindon Borough Council

Reviewing options for additional electric or hybrid fleet for the future

Considering options for solar panel energy as a future project



8. Materials and products

- We will aim to source recycled products particularly for our high volume consumables.
- We will use peat free compost.
- We will support initiatives such as Plastic Free Swindon.
- We will recycle materials within our day to day operation whenever it is possible to do so e.g. reusing timber for seats, fencing and planting, repairing and sustaining equipment in use, returning metal fly tipping to scrap metal recycling



9. Zero Waste

- We will work with Swindon Borough Council to discourage flytipping and promote a safe and clean environment.
- We will work in partnership with Swindon Borough Council and promote use of door step waste collection resources and other sources of help.
- We will promote use of Swindon Borough Council's household recycling centre.

Actions @ 01.06.24:

Dialogue with local groups and organisations

Consider ways to reduce prevalence of flytipping and address hotspots



10. Zero Carbon Energy

- We will promote activities that move towards a low carbon future.

Actions @ 01.06.24:

Ongoing review of options to become consume lower energy and promote biodiversity

Conclusion:

In common with all services, West Swindon Parish Council has a finite budget and a fixed set of staffing resources to deliver services across a large urban parish area. The Parish Council has to balance practical choices with ethical choices.

With 991,000 square metres of grass, 67,000 square metres of shrub beds, 69,000 linear metres of hedging and 20 play area sites, the Parish Council cannot provide bespoke services and standards as requested by small groups and individual residents. There are also some methods of maintenance that are more achievable with the size of the team and tools available. For example, we need to use certain tools, machines and vehicles to complete the wide range of tasks and services required on a daily basis such as mechanical mowers and both a large and small tractor.

Decisions are made that ensure our choices are

- fit for the health and safety of the team and the public
- fit for purpose (able to sustain use, appropriate for the job required)
- cost effective (purchase and long term use equate to good value)
- employee friendly (e.g. low vibration, lightweight, ergonomic)

The Parish Council also has to deliver a standard of service that meets its legal obligations and is suitable for local environment. Swindon Borough Council remains the land owner of public open spaces in West Swindon and sets standards for the Parish Council. Parish Councillors know that local expectations and attitudes can vary, however we will aim to be consistent, constructive and communicative about what we do and why we do it.